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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8985
INFO RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1002
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2428
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1163
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI 0099
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8162
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RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 1379
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6378
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0356
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 1560
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 0017
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 0981
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3660
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0829
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA 0020
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR 0038
RUEHVN/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 0238
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0037
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 8811
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0056

UNCLAS COLOMBO 001074

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/INS AND IO/T

E.O 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AORC](#) [CPCTC](#) [SNAR](#) [CPCTC](#) [UNODC](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: RESULTS OF COLOMBO PLAN NOVEMBER 20 MEETING

REF: SECSTATE 122193

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: At Colombo Plan's 262nd Council meeting on November 20, 2008, participating delegates deferred a decision on whether to grant Burma a three-year moratorium on payment of the annual membership fee and on two requests from Bangladesh to both have its arrears waived and obtain a temporary exemption of the increased annual membership fees. The USG agreed to serve on the Standing Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters for 2008/2009. Participants agreed to invite Brunei as a provisional member of Colombo Plan. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The primary agenda of the meeting was to determine whether to grant Burma's request for a three-year moratorium on payment of the annual membership fee, as well as Bangladesh's requests to have its arrears waived and to have temporary exemption from the increased annual membership fees. Econoff presented reftel points opposing these requests. No consensus was reached at the meeting. Representatives from Sri Lanka, Japan, Indonesia and South Korea recommended that Colombo Plan work with the two countries to either accept a moratorium and/or establish an installment plan. The Ambassador of Nepal suggested that the Council should establish criterion on which that the decision be based. Thailand, Pakistan, Maldives and Pakistan had no objections, and India was awaiting guidance from its government. Participants agreed that Colombo Plan Secretary General (SecGen) Patricia Chia should discuss other payment options with the Bangladeshi and Burmese representatives, and that the final decision should be made at the next Council meeting in January 2009.

¶3. (U) Although not in the agenda, the Japanese representative presented a statement from his government highlighting GOJ concerns on the use of member financial contributions to Colombo Plan. Prior to the meeting, members were copied on a letter sent by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the SecGen, requesting additional information on the organization's spending plans for the increased member contributions. Since the initial letter, the SecGen and GOJ have exchanged a series of additional letters. The SecGen, who was

given a copy of the Japanese statement presented at the meeting, presented her arguments regarding each the Japanese concerns. The SecGen deferred discussion of the concerns by the Japanese government to the next Council meeting. Post will continue to send scanned copies of the correspondence to IO/T.

¶4. (U) Standing Committee: Econoff delivered reftel point and agreed that the U.S. will participate as a member of the Standing Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters for 2008/2009. Other invited members that confirmed their participation were Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Malaysia; India's acceptance is pending New Delhi's approval. The first standing committee meeting will be held on January 8, 2009.

¶5. (U) Other matters: SecGen informed the meeting that nine nominations have been submitted for the position of the Director of the Drug Advisory Program (DAP). Due to the lack of qualifications among nominees, however, Colombo Plan agreed to extend the deadline for DAP nominations to January 2, 2009. Separately, all participants agreed to admit Brunei as a provisional member.

¶6. (U) The next Colombo Plan Council meeting is scheduled for January 15, 2009, and will be chaired by the newly-elected President of the Colombo Plan, Ambassador to Thailand Thinakorn Kanasuta. Post will advise the provisional agenda prior to both the council and standing committee meetings.

BLAKE